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PRESS RELEASE

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Increasing Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

Today, USAID launched the *Project for e-Accessible Education* to increase opportunities for students with disabilities by fostering the use of assistive information technology in instruction as a tool for gaining better education and inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classes.

The project, implemented by the Open the Windows association, also promoted the paper "Assistive Information Technology for Improved Inclusiveness of Education," which summarizes the success stories, best practices and lessons learned from the earlier *Equal Access for Equal Opportunities* project.

"To build on the successes of the previous project, we will continue to promote inclusion and equality among all students by continuing to support the initial 21 schools, extending support to nine more schools, and increasing the number of e-accessible textbooks available in this country," said U.S. Ambassador Paul D. Wohlers. "Together, we will make Macedonia's education system a truly e-accessible system."

"This project will contribute to improving the inclusiveness of the education system and will allow better quality education and equal opportunities for all students, which is the basis of complete inclusion of persons with disabilities in all spheres of social life as equal and active citizens," said Minister of Education and Science Pance Krlev.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The Project for e-Accessible Education is a two-year, \$300,000 follow-on project to the *Equal Access for Equal Opportunities (EAEO)* project. The EAEO project ran from February 2010 to February 2012, introducing assistive technology in primary education by equipping schools and providing training to over 400 teachers and school staff members on how to use assistive technology in instruction.

The "Open the Windows" association is dedicated to promoting access to information technology for individuals with disabilities, enabling them to fully utilize their abilities. For details, please visit: (www.openthewindows.org).

The American people, through USAID, have invested over \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is working with the people of Macedonia to create jobs, strengthen democratic institutions and practices, enhance integrated education, and prepare students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>